

## ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

I had assumed a sort of immunity at this session of conference, and checked my briefcase and my thoughts in one of the outer rooms. With all respects to President Clark, it takes more than a rounding up of one's shoulders to give utterance before this congregation, and I ask for an interest in your faith and prayers as I face this responsibility.

## RESTRICTED BY TIME'S LIMITATIONS

I heard some weeks ago someone ask one of the secretaries of one of the brethren—someone who apparently had tried repeatedly to make an appointment—"What it would require for a humble member of the Church to have an audience with the First Presidency." The only answer I could think of was "More time," which unfortunately we cannot extend or increase.

Also occasionally one hears someone say: "You haven't ever been out to our ward." When I heard this remark a few weeks ago, I made a mental note of how many Sabbaths it would take to visit all the wards in the Church, and it would require about thirty years of Sundays for any one of the brethren to go to all of the wards and independent branches now existent. But by the time they got around that first thirty years, there would probably be another thirty years of new wards waiting for them, considering the growth of the Church.

I made another mental calculation along this same line, prompted by this same question—"What would it require for a humble member of the Church to have an audience with the First Presidency?"—and multiplied the number of hours in a day by the number of days in the year, and the number of years in an average life expectancy (using the scriptural allotment of three score and ten) and found that in this life, if we are fortunate enough to live that long, we have only about six hundred thousand hours to do all that we have to do. But take from that approximately one-third for sleep, and then take another substantial slice for the years of our youth, for preparation, for going to and from, for waiting for late people and late appointments, and a good many other of the essentials, and it reduces itself down to a very limited time in total hours of life. With a Church of more than a million people, with a Church which is rapidly growing, it must become apparent, brethren, to all of us, how much more of the weight of responsibility must continually be carried back in the wards and the stakes, in the priesthood quorums, by the ward teachers, by all of the organized agencies of the Church which were set up for this very purpose and which, if functioning properly, would care for all these needs and would make fewer and fewer personal demands upon the time of the First Presidency and of the other brethren here at Church headquarters.

## THE BASIS OF STRENGTH AND GROWTH

I know that these brethren, many of them, cannot extend the physical limits of their time. I know that President McKay's car, for example, is down in the parking lot behind the office at six or seven o'clock almost any morning. And I heard a request made of President Clark to attend an evening function not long ago, and heard him make the statement that he was working on the scriptures almost every night till midnight and after. And with the other brethren it is, in an approaching degree, at least, a similar situation.

With these fullest of days, full beyond filling them further, with many weighty decisions to be made, with many demands upon every hour of every day, and with time not being subject to extension, the answer is of course a great statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith, repeated by his successors, frequently quoted, and basically true: "Teach them correct principles and let them govern themselves." That's the basis of strength and growth in this Church and kingdom—provided we follow the correct principles. They are there; we have been taught them; the plan of operation is in the handbooks and elsewhere; the scriptures and the revelations are before us. And many of the decisions, I am sure, that we refer on up rather than take the responsibility of making them within the limits and scope of the offices we hold, we could readily avoid passing up, if we would prayerfully and earnestly follow the correct principles we have been taught and govern ourselves, each one according to his calling.

## THE TIME TEST

About six hundred thousand hours of life, brethren, for him who lives three score and ten, minus the years of youth and of preparation, minus the hours of rest, minus many other things! I wouldn't be surprised if in a man's effective career, his actual disposable time might not come down to something more like two hundred thousand hours, or even less, when all these other things are considered—which means that we must be about our Father's business and give everything we do the time test. It means that there is no time for any shabby or shoddy thing. In all that we read, in the books with which we become familiar, which we make our companions, in the entertainment to which we devote our time, in all else that we do, we must give it the time test, and as we have been taught, we must acquaint ourselves with the correct principles and govern ourselves, and assume the responsibility of the offices and callings to which we have been called.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Prophet Joseph Smith made an eloquent utterance on this question of free agency and of the assuming of responsibility. One hour of righteous freedom on earth, he said, is worth more than an eternity of bondage. The Lord has given us our agency and our individual responsibility. We have it in the Church and we have it

*Saturday, April 7**Priesthood Meeting*

in all that we do. May we go forward and use our agency in accordance with correct principles, and give all that we do the time test, and relieve the brethren over us as much as we can within the line of prescribed procedure, within the line of those things which we have been taught and those things which we read in scripture, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER THORPE B. ISAACSON

#### *Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

President Clark, President McKay, my other beloved brethren of the General Authorities, and my dear brethren of the priesthood, truly this is nearly breathtaking, and I feel very humble in standing here tonight. I am sure we didn't expect this tonight, and I will be grateful if I can have an interest in your faith and prayers.

Yes, this is very much a humbling experience. I wish all of you could have the experience I am now having of looking over this vast audience. I have prayed to the Lord that when I should be called to occupy this position that he should not leave me. I have prayed to him first because I believe in prayer and, second, because I know I need the blessings of the Lord. I confess to you that without those blessings and his sustaining help and influence that I am nothing.

#### PROPHETS OF GOD

Surely one's testimony is strengthened as he comes here and listens to the brethren, listens to the words of the Lord given to us by his servants, yes, by prophets, seers, and revelators of God, our Eternal Father. We often hear them referred to as prophets, but I am wondering, members of the Church and particularly holders of the priesthood, if we give serious thought to the full meaning of that term. I recognize them as prophets of God, I know you do, but there are times, perhaps, when we pass that thought by lightly. Do you feel toward these brethren, prophets of the Lord, as you would had you known the prophets of old? I want to bear my testimony to you that I know they are prophets of the living God, I know they are inspired of our Father in Heaven in their calling. I hope you will have the same feeling burning in your hearts and accept their teachings, because they are inspired of our Father in Heaven. If, as members of the Church and particularly the Priesthood, we could only have the faith and the assurance and the conviction that these brethren are prophets, seers, and revelators, I believe we would pay more attention to what they tell us. Yes, spirituality is as essential to a man's soul as vitamins are to his body.

#### ADULT MEMBERS OF AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

As I look into this great congregation tonight, I have been thinking of the adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, many of